

STATEMENT OF KATE STEVENSON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PARKS, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, AND RECREATION OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES CONCERNING S. RES. 57, A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE COMMEMORATION OF THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION.

MAY 21, 1997

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today regarding S. Res. 57, a resolution to support the commemoration of the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

While the Administration traditionally does not comment on resolutions such as this that will not become law, we are pleased to offer our views on the historical significance of this expedition and to suggest some language changes to address the current historical interpretation of these events.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition was one of the most dramatic and significant episodes in the history of the United States. It stands, incomparably, as our Nation's epic in documented exploration of the American West. In 1804-06, it carried the destiny as well as the flag of our young Nation westward from the Mississippi across thousands of miles of uncharted lands to the Pacific Ocean.

In its scope and achievements, the Expedition towers among the major explorations in the history of the world. Its findings contributed vital new knowledge concerning the resources and

inhabitants of the lands west of the Mississippi River. The resulting geopolitical impact of the mission

had far-reaching effects upon international boundaries and relations.

The Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition will occur in the years 2004-06, with additional activities beginning in 2003, which corresponds to the year the Louisiana Territory was purchased and preparations for the Expedition got underway. The National Park Service, by virtue of its role as the Federal administrator of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail as well as other park units along the Expedition route and in the territory they explored, plans to play a key role in the observance of the Bicentennial at the Federal level.

The responsibility for coordinating Bicentennial activities within the National Park Service lies in the Midwest Region with the Superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The staff for the trail will assist, to the extent possible and appropriate, other public and private interests pursuing Bicentennial-related activities and developments along the trail that will help tell the story of the expedition.

We have supported the efforts of the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council, and its parent organization--the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, and we will continue to work closely with them. The council and foundation should be the focal points for overall coordination of the national observance of the Bicentennial. They deserve the support and recognition accorded to them in S. Res. 57.

We suggest the following revisions in the wording of the resolution:

1. In the fourth clause of the preamble on page 3, we recommend changing the spelling of “Sacajawea” to “Sacagawea”. Lewis and Clark always spelled it with a “g” in the third syllable, not a “j” as in the popularized form. In this same clause, we recommend that the names of other Indians that were instrumental in helping the Expedition be added, including Twisted Hair, Tetoharsky, Yellept, and Comowool.

2. We recommend that the first paragraph of the resolving clause be revised to recognize the 28-year history of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and the work it is doing by adding “Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and the” to the beginning of line 3 on page 4.

Mr. Chairman, we appreciate the interest and support of the Senate in the upcoming Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. And we are pleased to assist other public and private entities as appropriate in the commemoration of this outstanding historical event.

This concludes my prepared remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.